

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher produced the research results, which are discussed in this chapter. It is very important that the discussion about the overall study results influences the outcome. The purpose of this discussion is to provide answers to the problem description and to draw conclusions from the relevant theoretical review.

A. Findings

Data for this study analysis were collected through in-depth interviews with six participants (S1 to S6) who are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from the 2021 academic year in Banjarmasin. The study explores their experiences learning English listening skills using Taylor Swift's songs. The findings are divided with answering into two research question:

1. How does Taylor Swift's song engage EFL students' interest learning English listening?
2. What are the challenges that students' face when using Taylor Swift's song in learning English listening?

Each participant shared their personal struggles, motivations, and experiences, highlighting the dynamic and individualized nature of music-based learning.

1. EFL Students' engagement in learning English listening through Taylor Swift's song

Learning a language is a dynamic and complex process that is impacted by both internal and external factors. Many students often find traditional teaching methods, such as lectures and textbooks, boring and uninspired. However, an alternative approach that appears more natural and immersive has been made possible by the availability of emotionally stirring and captivating media, such as music. The findings of this study revealed that the music of Taylor Swift has been a significant role in motivating students to enhance their English listening skills. This was identified as a consequence of the research undertaken. Students report that its storytelling lyrics, emotional connection, and melodic appeal allow them to experience English in a way that is not only enjoyable but also gives them the impression that it is a personal experience. In contrast to typical listening exercises, which are often based on fake dialogue and academic content, Taylor Swift's songs offer rich, genuine, and contextually meaningful input. This is different from general listening practice. The deep personal connection the students created with the lyrics was one of the most surprising findings to emerge from the interviews. This deep connection makes the process of learning English more interesting and emotionally satisfying for students. Students described how music changed their impression of language study from something that was required to something that they found delightful.

a. Personal Connection and Emotional Engagement

For most students, learning English is not just about mastering a skill; it's about creating a connection with language in a way that is fun and feels natural. Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly highlighted that Taylor Swift's music is more than just a tool for learning English; rather, it is the emotional experience that brings the language to life. Through the use of music, students can interact with language in a personal and deep way, different from the traditional and academic means usually used in the classroom. In particular, Taylor Swift's songs give students a sense of emotional depth, which adds to the enjoyment and significance of their educational experience. Meanwhile, for S1, his interest in Western popular culture was the impetus for him to start the journey of learning English. When telling his story, he mentioned that he was never interested in formal English learning, but everything changed when he started listening to music in English. At first he just hummed without realizing the deeper connotations contained in the songs. On the other hand, when he begins to recognize words and phrases that are familiar to him, he feels a great urge to understand the music more deeply. In a short time, his engagement with English changed from passive listening to active learning. He found himself actively searching for songs, translating them, and internalizing their lyrical content. His enthusiasm is visible when he describes his experience:

“Awalnya aku gak tertarik belajar bahasa Inggris lewat pelajaran di kelas, tapi sejak dengerin lagu-lagunya Taylor Swift, aku jadi lebih tertarik. Aku sering nyari liriknya dan coba paham artinya.”

He explained that formal English lessons never really caught his attention. However, listening to Taylor Swift's music sparked his curiosity. He began to actively search for the lyrics and tried to understand their meaning, which made learning feel more enjoyable and less like a chore.

S2 also shared a similar experience, first getting to know English through social media and popular music. He admitted that his interest in Taylor Swift's songs was largely influenced by his friends who often discussed them. At first, he listened in a relaxed manner, not focusing too much on the lyrics. As time went by, he began to notice recurring patterns in the language—certain phrases and expressions appeared frequently, prompting his curiosity to investigate their meaning. He remembers one of the early occasions when he felt truly connected to the language:

“Aku mulai suka bahasa Inggris karena temen-temenku sering bahas lagu Taylor Swift. Aku jadi penasaran sama arti liriknya”

She shared that her friends introduced her to Taylor Swift's songs, and this made her interested in learning English. She wanted to

understand what the lyrics meant, so she began exploring new vocabulary on her own.

For numerous students, Taylor Swift's music evolved into more than merely a study aid—it served as a backdrop to their feelings and life journeys. Themes of love, heartbreak, self-discovery, and nostalgia are deeply moving, transforming the learning experience from just an academic assignment into a meaningful personal journey. S4 experienced a deep emotional bond with the lyrics, which further fueled his desire to understand their meaning. She described how the emotional depth of Taylor Swift's storytelling captivated her attention to the language.

“Lagu-lagunya Taylor Swift tuh dalem banget. Kadang aku ngerasa liriknya nyambung sama kehidupan aku, jadi makin semangat belajar.”

She felt a strong emotional connection to the lyrics because they often reflected her own life experiences. This personal relevance made her more motivated to learn and understand the language.

The emotional connection to the songs fostered a deep internal drive to learn English. In contrast to the conventional classroom environment, where students frequently engage in learning out of necessity, listening to Taylor Swift's songs was an activity they pursued willingly and with great excitement. The connection between the listener and the lyrics created a sense of intimacy, relatability, and significance in English.

The appropriateness of Taylor Swift's lyrics is another factor that contributes to this emotional engagement. His talent for expressing deep emotions through language transformed English into something more lively and lyrical, making it more than just a collection of rules to memorize. S3, who had felt a disconnect from conventional English lessons, found a reawakened passion for learning through music. He shares how songs like Back to December helped him understand that lyrics can convey narratives that resonate on both a personal and universal level:

“Aku gak sadar belajar saat dengerin lagunya, tapi ternyata aku mulai bisa pake kata-kata dari liriknya dalam obrolan.”

He realized that by listening repeatedly, he started to remember and use English words from the songs in everyday conversations, even without consciously trying to study them.

The personal connection and emotional engagement that students experienced through Taylor Swift's music significantly influenced their language-learning journey. The songs infused English with vibrancy, making it feel relatable and enjoyable, demonstrating that learning a language transcends mere memorization and involves cultivating a meaningful connection with it. Taylor Swift's talent for creating emotionally impactful lyrics has turned passive listeners into engaged learners, showcasing that music can serve as a potent instrument in second language acquisition when it resonates with both the heart and the intellect.

b. The Role Storytelling in Engagement

One of the most engaging reasons why Taylor Swift's songs connect profoundly with EFL students is her talent for storytelling through music. Taylor Swift's lyrics stand apart from many pop songs that depend on repetitive phrases or vague expressions; they often unfold like short narratives, featuring distinct characters, emotional journeys, and striking imagery. This storytelling approach in songwriting enhances the engagement of her music while also acting as an effective resource for students aiming to develop their English listening abilities. Her songs utilize storytelling to provide contextualized language input, enabling students to naturally and meaningfully absorb new vocabulary, sentence structures, and idiomatic expressions.

For S3, the storytelling aspect of Taylor Swift's music significantly influenced her English learning journey. She remembered how, initially, she found it difficult to keep up with spoken English in everyday conversations. However, once she began listening to songs that featured clear and structured narratives, she found it much easier to understand the flow of the language. One of the initial songs that aided her was *All Too Well*, which conveyed a vivid and emotionally intense narrative. She recounted her experience of how the song not only moved her emotionally but also clarified the meaning behind the lyrics:

“Pas denger All Too Well, aku kayak lagi baca cerita. Jadi lebih gampang ngerti isi lagunya.”

Her lyrics resemble poetry, and she narrates stories with grace. Listening to her songs becomes more significant, and I effortlessly learn new words and phrases. When I listen to a song like All Too Well, I don't merely hear random words, I perceive a complete narrative unfolding, which enhances my understanding of the meaning.

She explained that the song felt like reading a short story. Because it had a clear narrative structure, it was easier to follow and understand what was being said in English.

For S5, this storytelling element really influences S5's approach to learning English. He shared that he often finds it difficult to understand complete sentences during fast conversations, but when he listens to songs like The Story of Us, he can more easily trace the flow of the lyrics because of the song's logical progression. He explains that the storytelling aspect of his lyrics allows him to predict what will happen next, which facilitates a quicker understanding of the meaning:

“Kalau lagunya kayak The Story of Us, aku bisa tebak isi ceritanya, jadi lebih ngerti juga kata-katanya.”

Sometimes when I listen to people talking, I get lost because I don't know what they're going to say next. But in a song like

The Story of Us, I can follow the story, and that helps me understand the words more easily. It's like my brain knows what to expect, so I can focus more on the language instead of feeling lost.

He shared that he could predict the meaning of the lyrics because the song told a coherent story. This made it easier for him to learn new vocabulary in a meaningful context.

Additionally, Taylor Swift's employment of vivid language, metaphors, and character-focused narratives allows learners to appreciate how words and phrases operate in a more creative and expressive manner. For students like S4, this was one reason she favored learning English through music instead of textbooks. She described how a song like Enchanted opened her up to words and expressions that she wouldn't typically find in academic contexts. However, because the song conveyed a narrative, she could understand the meaning intuitively instead of relying on direct translation. She expressed:

"Di lagu Enchanted, aku ngerti arti 'enchanted' bukan dari kamus, tapi dari rasa dan cerita di lagunya."

There are so many words in her songs that I don't see in my English textbooks. But when I hear them in a song, I don't have to memorize them, I just understand them because they're part of the

story. Like in Enchanted, I learned what ‘enchanted’ means just by feeling the way the song tells the story.

She pointed out that instead of using a dictionary, she understood the meaning of the word "enchanted" based on the mood and narrative of the song.

This emphasizes an important benefit of narrative-based learning—it alleviates cognitive overload as students are not required to memorize words in isolation. Instead, they gain meaning organically through context, enabling them to internalize vocabulary and phrases with greater efficiency.

This was evident in S2’s experience, as she described how songs like Back to December and The Archer made English feel less like a subject to study and more like an experience to be felt. She observed that although some of the lyrics included unfamiliar words, the emotions conveyed in the song allowed her to grasp the meaning without the necessity of translating every single word. She expressed:

“Aku gak ngerti semua kata di Back to December, tapi karena emosinya terasa, aku bisa nebak maksudnya”

Even when I don’t understand every single word, I can still feel the story in the song. And because I feel it, I remember it. That’s why learning English through music is easier and it’s not just words, it’s feeling too.

She emphasized that even if she didn't understand every word, the emotion of the song helped her guess the overall meaning of the lyrics. Ultimately, storytelling plays an important role in interaction, especially in the context of learning English through Taylor Swift's music. The students in this study didn't just listen to the songs—they immersed themselves in them. His combination of structured narrative, rich vocabulary, and emotional depth makes his music an extraordinary medium for language learning, demonstrating that a language is most effectively acquired when it is experienced and felt, not just memorized.

c. Learning Strategies Used by Students

In this research, each student developed their own different learning strategy by utilizing Taylor Swift songs to improve their English listening skills. Some learners adopt a structured and analytical approach, while others prefer a more passive and in-depth method, letting the language gradually integrate into their understanding over time. Regardless of the strategy used, students found that listening to Taylor Swift songs repeatedly greatly improved their listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation skills.

In undergraduate, the approach to learning English through music develops into a purposeful and structured effort. In contrast to students who only absorb language through repeated listening, he applies a proactive and methodical strategy by keeping a lyric journal. In this journal, he notes new

vocabulary, examines its meaning, and attempts to incorporate it into everyday conversation. He described how this approach allowed him to feel more in control of his learning, facilitated tracking of his progress and improved his ability to recall words. In reflecting on his routine, he revealed:

“Aku punya buku lirik. Setiap nemu kata baru, aku tulis, terus aku coba pake di kalimat”

I call it my ‘lyric book’. It helps me remember difficult words and understand how they’re used. If I see a word more than once in different songs, I write it down and try to use it in a sentence later. That way, I don’t just memorize words, I actually understand them.

In S2, the focus of the learning process shifts from note-taking to testing oneself through sequential listening. She described his approach as initially listening to a song without referring to the lyrics, aiming to gauge his own understanding of the music. She would only check the lyrics to verify her understanding after listening a second or third time. He characterizes this method as a means of pushing the limits of one's capabilities, turning listening practice into a more engaging and participatory experience. Her approach also allows him to pinpoint the words he needs to concentrate on and the words he already understands intuitively. She revealed:

“Aku coba dengerin dulu tanpa liat lirik, terus baru liat liriknya. Kayak ngetes kemampuan sendiri.”

I try to listen first without looking at the lyrics, then I check them if I don't understand certain parts. It's like testing my own listening skill. If I can understand most of the song without reading the lyrics, I know my listening is improving.”

She preferred to test her comprehension first by listening without lyrics, then checking them afterward to see how well she understood.

For some students, the learning process through music takes place in a more natural way. S5, for example, does not use structured practice or deliberate learning methods. Instead, he relies on consistent exposure, playing Taylor Swift songs all day without having to concentrate on them. He thought that with more listening, the language would become more familiar, allowing him to easily acquire words and phrases as time went by. He characterized his method as a relaxed form of learning, stating that although he did not study actively, he still learned new vocabulary through exposure. In his own expression:

“Aku dengerin lagunya terus-menerus aja. Walaupun gak fokus, lama-lama kata-katanya masuk sendiri.”

I don't always concentrate when listening, but I still catch words and phrases over time. The more I listen, the easier it gets.

Even when I'm not paying full attention, my brain remembers certain words just because I've heard them so many times.

S5 achieved success through unconscious learning, whereas S6 chose for a more concentrated and organized approach by reading lyrics while enjoying music. He thought that having a visual reference for the lyrics being sung aided him in recognizing pronunciation patterns more effectively and in grasping how words are linked together in natural speech. He described how this method transformed listening into a less intimidating and more inviting experience, particularly for songs featuring rapid lyrics. He liked this technique for the experience of watching a movie with subtitles, saying:

“Aku suka dengerin lagu sambil baca liriknya. Jadi bisa tau gimana pengucapannya.”

I follow the lyrics while listening so I can see how words sound together in natural speech. It's really helpful when the pronunciation is different from how I expect it. Sometimes, a word is written in a way that I don't expect it to sound. And following the lyrics helps me make that connection.

This study reveals interesting insights into how students modify their strategies in response to the complexity of the songs they listen to. Some participants indicated that they would change their strategies according to the challenges they faced. For example, S1 stated that in a slow

tempo ballad style song, he emphasized understanding the meaning and emotions conveyed in the lyrics. On the other hand, for faster songs, he listens to them repeatedly to train his ear to match the tempo.

S2 mentioned a similar method, explaining that when he encountered a song with unfamiliar vocabulary, he would initially try to infer the meaning from the context before looking for a definition. He believes that this method of guessing improves his capacity to infer meaning from context, an important skill in everyday conversation. He shared his experience with this approach:

“Kalau ada kata yang gak aku tahu, aku coba tebak dulu dari konteks, baru cek artinya.”

If I hear a word I don't know, I don't look it up right away. First, I try to understand it based on the rest of lyrics. Usually, I can guess the meaning just from the way the sentence is structured, and that helps me remember it better.

Common strategies that emerged during the interviews were the use of repetition and the sense of security found in listening to familiar songs. Many students deliberately choose longer songs, such as All Too Well (10 Minute Version), because the increased length gives them the opportunity to fully engage with the language at a comfortable pace. S5 mentioned a preference for listening to longer songs several times, as this allows for

greater comfort in the language and the ability to recognize repetitive patterns in pronunciation and word use. He explained his thought process:

“Since the song is long, I don’t feel the need to keep switching to another song. I can just listen again and again until I get used to the words. It’s like my brain has more time to adjust to the way the words sound.”

The learning strategies employed by students in this study demonstrate a significant degree of independence and flexibility. Students discovered various methods to personalize their learning experience, whether by actively engaging, listening sequentially, passively absorbing information, or utilizing visual aids. The effectiveness of their strategies lies in the fact that they were not imposed or dictated by a teacher; rather, they were selected organically, reflecting personal preference, comfort, and effectiveness. This degree of self-directed learning indicates that music can serve as a powerful instrument in acquiring a second language, especially when learners assume responsibility for their educational journey.

The students in this study showed that learning a language through music can be achieved through structured exercises, intuitive inference, or immersive repetition, highlighting that there is no one correct approach. Each learner instead uncovered and cultivated their own methods, demonstrating that when learning is enjoyable and personally significant, motivation and engagement arise organically.

1. Challenges Faced by Students When Learning English Listening Through Taylor Swift's Songs

Taylor Swift's songs offered an engaging way to learn English, yet they also posed various linguistic and cognitive challenges for EFL students. The students in this study identified four significant challenges they faced while utilizing her music as a listening comprehension resource:

1. Unfamiliar and advanced vocabulary
2. Figurative language and idiomatic expressions
3. Fast-paced lyrics and pronunciation difficulties
4. Balancing enjoyment with active learning

Although students were eager to utilize music as a learning tool, they frequently encountered difficulties in comprehending the lyrics' meaning because of intricate vocabulary, poetic phrases, and fast-paced delivery. These challenges prompted them to create different coping strategies to enhance their understanding while continuing to appreciate the music.

a. Difficulty in Understanding Advanced Vocabulary and Figurative Language

For many students, a big challenge in utilizing Taylor Swift's songs as an English learning resource is the struggle to understand certain unfamiliar or complicated words and phrases. In contrast to conversational English, which typically uses familiar words and simple sentence structures,

Swift's lyrics often employ poetic language, sophisticated vocabulary, and figurative expressions that invite deeper interpretation. Although students appreciated the narrative quality of the music, they had difficulty with words and phrases that did not have a direct translation in their native language.

S2 shared her experience of often finding words in Taylor Swift's songs that were foreign to his from English textbooks or lessons in class. Initially, she believed he could rely on direct translations, but she soon understood that many words had nuances and connotations that were not easily conveyed through straightforward dictionary definitions. She recounts his experience listening to *The Archer*, where the line "Who could ever leave me, darling?" resonates deeply. However, the phrase confused him: "But who can stay?" She explained:

"Aku sering nemu kata-kata yang gak pernah diajarin di kelas.

Kadang udah nyari artinya tapi tetap gak ngerti."

Some of the words in her songs don't appear in my English textbooks. I often hear the words that I have never seen in class, and sometimes I have to look them up. But even after finding the definition, the meaning is still not always clear.

Her struggle illustrates a frequent difficulty in acquiring a second language, as learners frequently believe that learning vocabulary is merely about pairing English words with their counterparts in their native tongue.

Many English words possess multiple meanings and nuanced distinctions that vary based on the context of their usage.

For S3, the challenge lay not only in unfamiliar vocabulary but also in phrases that defied literal translation. She clarified that certain phrases in Taylor Swift's lyrics lost their meaning when translated literally, which made it challenging for her to understand their true significance. She provided an example from *Enchanted*, where Swift sings, "*This night is sparkling, don't you let it go.*" She recalled:

"Aku pernah bingung waktu dengar 'this night is sparkling'. Aku kira itu arti harfiah, padahal maksudnya bukan malam yang benar-benar bersinar."

I tried translating the lyrics word for word, but sometimes they don't make sense that way. Like when she says 'this night is sparkling', I thought, 'How can a night sparkle?' But then I realized she means the feeling of the night, not the actual night.

A further example of this challenge comes from S4, who encountered difficulties with idioms in songs such as *You Belong With Me*. He felt confused by phrases like "If you could see that I am the one who understands you," because the construction "I am the one who understands you" was familiar to him. When he tried to translate the phrase directly into the original language, he found that it lost its intended meaning. He told his experience:

“Aku ngerti kata-kata satu per satu, tapi pas digabung, artinya beda.”

I thought I understand the words individually, but when I put them together, the meaning was different from what I expected.

Sometimes, English sentences work differently from my language, and it take time to get used to them.

He noted that even if individual words were familiar, their meaning could change when used together in idioms or expressions.

As a result, students need to create coping strategies to understand challenging vocabulary and figurative expressions. S5, for example, relies on repetition and inferring meaning from context. When he encounters a word or phrase that he considers unfamiliar, he will first listen to the entire song before looking for its meaning. He clarified that through this approach, he often manages to deduce the meaning by considering the context of the surrounding words and the emotions expressed in the song. He conveyed his method:

“Aku coba tebak dulu arti kata baru dari lagu. Kalau gak bisa, baru aku cari artinya.”

If I hear a word I don’t understand, I try to figure it out by listening to the whole song first. If I still don’t get it, then I look it up. Usually, when I check later, I find that my guess was close.

He preferred to guess meanings based on the song's context before resorting to a dictionary.

In spite of the obstacles, numerous students discovered that grappling with complex vocabulary and figurative language ultimately enhanced their learning experience. S6, for instance, shared that while he frequently experienced frustration with specific phrases, the journey of deciphering them enhanced the value of his learning experience. He explained how, as time passed, he grew increasingly at ease with inferring meanings from context and depending less on literal translations. He contemplated:

"Dulu aku harus cek semua kata. Tapi sekarang aku coba tebak dulu maksud kalimatnya."

At first, I always needed to check the meaning of every word I didn't know. But now, I try to guess first. I realized that understanding English is not just about knowing every word, it's about understanding the whole message.

This experience underscores an important insight from this research: although advanced vocabulary and figurative language present challenges for EFL learners, they also offer valuable opportunities for deeper language acquisition. Through the exploration of poetic and idiomatic expressions in captivating contexts, students are motivated to improve higher-order

thinking skills, including inferring meaning, identifying patterns, and establishing logical connections between words and emotions.

The students' experiences showed that Taylor Swift's music served to expand their vocabulary and improve their critical thinking about language. While understanding each word and phrase can sometimes be difficult, the process of tracing complex lyrics—and ultimately deciphering them—encourages students to grow into more confident and independent learners. With consistent dedication and engagement, they slowly grow a better understanding of the depths of the English language, showing that even the most difficult elements of language acquisition can be turned into opportunities for development and exploration.

b. Challenges with Fast-Paced Lyrics and Pronunciation

One of the significant difficulty students face when learning English through Taylor Swift songs is keeping the pace of the lyrics and understanding pronunciation patterns. In contrast to conventional listening exercises, where speech is usually slowed down and clearly articulated, song lyrics are presented at a natural, sometimes fast tempo, causing the words to blend together. This creates challenges for students in recognizing certain words, processing them instantly, and understanding the meaning of each line.

For S1, this is a significant challenge in using music as a listening tool. She mentioned that when she first started listening to Taylor Swift's songs, she had trouble catching every word, especially in the fast-paced songs. One song that was a challenge for him was All Too Well (10 Minute Version), because the lyrics were presented quickly, with minimal breaks between lines. He expressed his frustration in trying to match the song's rhythm, noting that although he could identify some of the words, his mind struggled to process them quickly enough to fully understand the lyrics. He remembered:

"Kalau lagunya cepet banget, aku harus dengerin berkali-kali biar bisa ngikutin."

The words come so fast that I had to listen multiple times before I could follow. It wasn't that I didn't know the words, it was that my brain couldn't keep up with them in real time.

Fast lyrics made it hard for her to keep up, so she had to replay the songs multiple times to understand them.

In S5, the challenge lay not only in the rapid pace of the lyrics but also in the way words flowed together in natural speech. He clarified that although he could identify the words separately, they took on a different sound when sung rapidly and merged with one another. One example he provided was from *You Belong With Me*, where he initially found it challenging to differentiate the phrase "*You belong with me*" because it

came across as a single, unbroken word instead of distinct words. He articulated his challenge:

“Kadang kata-kata dalam lirik nyatu semua, jadi susah dipisah.”

Sometimes she blends words together, making it harder to catch every detail. In *You Belong With Me*, I kept hearing ‘Yourebelongwithme’ as one word, and it took me a while to realize she was saying separate words.

He found that fast delivery often caused words to blend together, making it hard to distinguish them.

In S3, there was also a challenge regarding the pronunciation of specific words, particularly when Swift employed informal or colloquial pronunciations. She explained that although she had learned the correct pronunciation rules in school, many of Swift’s songs included slang, contractions, or more casual speech patterns that she was unfamiliar with. One example she cited was from *Style*, where Swift sings, “*You got that James Dean daydream look in your eye.*” The phrase “*You got that*” was spoken rapidly as “*Ya got that*”, which puzzled her since she had learned the complete form instead of the shortened version. She articulated her response:

“Pengucapan di lagu kadang beda dari yang aku pelajari di kelas. Kayak 'you got that' jadi 'ya got that'.”

I kept replaying the part where she says ‘You got that’ because it didn’t sound like what I learned in class. I was expecting ‘You got that’ clearly, but she says it more like ‘Ya got that’, and it threw me off at first.

This experience highlights a broader problem faced by EFL learners: overcoming pronunciation differences found in everyday conversation. In formal English lessons, pronunciation is usually taught clearly and precisely; however, in the real world, such as songs, movies, or informal conversations, words may be shortened, slurred, or pronounced differently based on the speaker's accent, intonation, and speech rhythm.

To overcome these challenges, many students devise their own coping strategies. S6, for example, found that the most effective method for organizing fast lyrics was to slow down the song and follow the words. He noted that when he listened to a song at a regular tempo, he often overlooked important words, but by playing it at a slower speed, he was able to understand the details more clearly and progressively trained his ear to identify the words at a faster tempo. he shared:

“Kalau lagunya cepet, aku pelanin aja sambil liat lirik. Biar telinga terbiasa.”

If a song is too fast, I replay it multiple times or use a lyric video. That way, I can see how words are actually pronounced, and it helps me train my ears to recognize the better.

A useful approach used by S2 is to break songs down into smaller segments rather than trying to understand them all at once. He described how, when he first heard an up-tempo song, he would concentrate on a verse or chorus, replaying the part several times until he felt comfortable with the song. He found that this method allowed him to continually increase his understanding without feeling overwhelmed. He outlined his approach:

“Aku dengerin bagian per bagian. Jadi bisa fokus dan gak keteteran.”

I don't try to understand the whole song in one go. First, I listen to just the first verse and try to get used to it. Then I move on to the next part. It helps me focus better instead of getting lost in the whole song.

The challenges presented by fast-paced lyrics and variations in pronunciation were both frustrating and valuable learning experiences for the students. Although challenging at first, these obstacles compelled them to enhance their listening abilities, including the ability to identify connected speech, recognize contractions, and train their ears to comprehend spoken English more rapidly.

In the end, the students agreed that Taylor Swift's energetic songs served not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity to improve their listening skills. Despite initial challenges, determination and thoughtful strategies allow them to gain confidence in understanding spoken English

in a natural and fluent form. By engaging in consistent practice and exposure, they develop the ability to refine their listening skills, interpret speech more effectively, and increase their overall proficiency in English.

c. **Balancing Enjoyment with Active Learning**

For many students, the main benefit of learning English through Taylor Swift songs is that it is easy and fun. In contrast to conventional classroom activities that typically emphasize memorization and rigid listening assignments, listening to music offers a relaxing and immersive experience. However, this element of enjoyment turns out to be a double-edged sword—students enjoy listening to Taylor Swift's music, but they often have difficulty concentrating on their studies while enjoying the song as an artistic creation.

S5 explained that he first became involved with Taylor Swift's music purely for fun. Initially, he found enjoyment in the melodies and feelings conveyed through his lyrics, without focusing too much on the meaning of the words or their pronunciation. As he began to use music as a learning tool, he found himself frequently immersed in the rhythm, losing sight of the importance of understanding the lyrics. He elaborated:

“Aku kadang keasyikan nyanyi, lupa kalau harus belajar.”

Sometimes, I just enjoy the song and forget that I’m supposed to be learning. I sing along, but I don’t always pay attention to the meaning.

He admitted that singing along for fun sometimes distracted him from the learning goal.

In S2, the challenge extended beyond mere focus; it also involved the struggle to refrain from singing along and instead concentrate on analyzing the lyrics. Once she learned the chorus of a song, she instinctively began to sing along, which diverted her attention from truly listening to the details of the lyrics. She reflected on her experience with *Love Story*:

“Kalau udah hafal chorus-nya, aku jadi nyanyi terus, lupa perhatiin liriknya.”

When I listen to Love Story, I automatically sing along because I know the lyrics. But because of that, I sometimes miss out on new words or phrases that I should be learning.

She noted that familiarity with the lyrics made her sing automatically, reducing her focus on vocabulary learning.

In order to overcome this challenge, students devised various strategies to harmonize enjoyment with learning. S6 developed a systematic three-step listening process that allowed him to appreciate the music while simultaneously gaining knowledge from it. He clarified that he would;

enjoy the song on your first listen, taking it in without any pressure, revisit the track and focus intently on the lyrics. Listen to the song while following along with the lyrics to better understand challenging sections. Through this approach, he initially gained an appreciation for the music, and then slowly redirected his attention towards language learning. He elaborated:

“Aku punya cara denger lagu tiga kali. Pertama buat nikmatin, kedua fokus dengerin, ketiga cek arti katanya.”

The first time, I just enjoy the song. The second time, I listen carefully to the lyrics. The third time, I look up difficult words. That way, I don’t feel like I’m forcing myself to study, but I’m still learning. He used a three-step method: first for enjoyment, second for focused listening, and third for vocabulary checking.

Some students find that using visual aids allows them to maintain focus on learning while also appreciating the song. S3, for example, stated that he often watches lyric videos on YouTube rather than simply listening to the audio version of a song. He found that displaying the lyrics on the screen allowed him to understand the words more effectively, while avoiding the stress of formal study sessions. He explained:

“Aku lebih suka nonton video lirik di YouTube biar bisa baca sambil dengerin.”

If I just listen, I sometimes get distracted by the melody. But if I watch a lyric video, I can see the words while listening, and that helps me understand them better.

He preferred lyric videos because they helped him read and listen at the same time, improving comprehension.

Even with these strategies, certain students still find it difficult to strike a balance between fun and learning. S4, for example, admitted that he sometimes felt guilty about turning a fun activity into a study session. He mentioned that when he tries to overanalyze the lyrics, it seems to detract from the emotional experience of the song. He expressed his difficulties:

“Kadang aku cuma pengen nikmatin lagunya tanpa mikirin makna. Tapi jadi ngerasa bersalah karena gak belajar.”

Sometimes, I just want to enjoy the music without thinking too much about the meaning. But then I feel like I’m wasting an opportunity to learn. It’s hard to find the right balance.

Ultimately, most students find that the secret to aligning fun with active learning lies in varying their listening approach. They realize that there's no need to thoroughly analyze every song—sometimes, it's okay to just enjoy listening for the fun of it. When they attempt to learn, they skillfully shift their focus and use strategies such as reading lyrics, repeated listening, and structured engagement to increase their understanding.

Their experience shows that learning through music will have the greatest impact if it is done naturally and enjoyable, not forced. Students develop a sustainable and motivating approach to improving their English listening skills by enjoying the process while engaging in intentional learning.

B. Discussion

This research focuses on the perspectives and stories of EFL students, aiming to explore their experiences and challenges in utilizing Taylor Swift's songs as a means to improve their English listening skills. The results show that Taylor Swift's music has two functions in the language learning journey. On the one hand, it acts as a powerful motivational instrument, increasing student engagement and making listening practice more enjoyable. In contrast, the complexity of the lyrics—which include figurative language, sophisticated vocabulary, rapid delivery, and variations in pronunciation—poses significant challenges. In contrast to scripted classroom dialogue that prioritizes clarity, Taylor Swift's lyrics embody natural speech patterns, relaxed expressions, and poetic form, resulting in a comprehension experience that is both satisfying and challenging. The narrative focus of the songs offers contextual insights that facilitate comprehension, while demanding a greater degree of cognitive and linguistic engagement. Students noted that although passive listening helped them become familiar with the sounds of English, actively engaging with lyrics, vocabulary, and pronunciation exercises was essential for deeper understanding.

This research highlights the importance of digital accessibility in music-based language learning. Streaming platforms, lyric videos, and online communities offer students ongoing access to original English-language content, facilitating independent learning outside of the classroom environment. Nonetheless, finding the right balance between enjoyment and concentrated language acquisition continues to pose a challenge. Many students first listen to Taylor Swift music for fun, making it difficult to transition to a more focused learning approach. This suggests that although music serves as a valuable additional resource for language learning, it should be combined with structured listening activities, guided lyric examination, and pronunciation practice to enhance its benefits. The next section will study these elements thoroughly, concentrating on how Taylor Swift's songs engage students in English listening and the barriers they face along the way.

This section provides an interpretation of the findings by relating them to relevant theories in the fields of second language acquisition and listening comprehension. This discussion is structured around two research questions: (1) How does Taylor Swift's music engage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in learning English listening skills? and (2) What challenges do students face when using Taylor Swift songs for listening comprehension? This analysis integrates existing theories from Chapter II with insights from previous research to provide a deeper understanding of the findings.

1. EFL Students' Interest in Learning English Through Taylor Swift's Songs

Taylor Swift's songs significantly enhance EFL students' enthusiasm for developing their English listening skills, thanks to their emotional depth, engaging storytelling, and outstanding vocal performance. In contrast to traditional listening materials that often rely on written conversations or scientific texts, music offers a more genuine and captivating listening experience. Students who interact with her songs are not only exposed to authentic spoken English but also discover a more enjoyable and relatable learning experience, which aids in maintaining their motivation over time.

The deep emotional bond that students form with the lyrics and melodies of Taylor Swift's music is a primary reason why they are attracted to her music as an educational resource. Many of her songs reflect captivating stories about personal experiences, relationships, and obstacles in life, making them quite relatable to listeners. Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis suggests that students can acquire language more effectively when the material they are studying is both comprehensible and engaging. A learner who is more emotionally invested in the subject matter is more likely to engage in repeated exposure, enhancing their understanding of what they hear. This emotional engagement leads children to listen to the same songs repeatedly, facilitating vocabulary acquisition without conscious effort, enhancing pronunciation, and fostering a deeper understanding of sentence structures.

Taylor Swift's unique storytelling style is a significant factor that captures students' interest in learning through her songs. This technique lends her lyrics a greater sense of structure and clarity compared to the more fragmented or abstract lyrics often found in other artists' songs. Her skillful construction of narratives in songs allows listeners to trace a coherent flow of ideas, increasing their capacity to anticipate meanings derived from familiar phrases. Paivio's (1986) Dual-Coding Theory suggests that the combination of verbal (lyrics) and non-verbal (melodic) elements enhances memory retention and supports more effective processing of spoken language, aligning with the theory's principles. Students tend to participate more in active listening when they listen to songs that feature different narratives. Through this form of listening, students attempt to decipher words and phrases while also understanding the overall message.

The word choice and clarity in Taylor Swift's songs make them very approachable for students who are in the learning process. Unlike many other musicians who heavily depend on vocal distortions, slang, or regional accents, Taylor Swift presents her songs with clear articulation and controlled pronunciation, making it easier for non-native speakers to grasp her lyrics. Students can enhance their phonemic awareness through this aspect of her singing style, allowing them to distinguish between similar sounds and further develop their listening accuracy. Additionally, the repetition of specific phrases and choruses in her songs aids in reinforcing language structures, making it

easier for students to internalize grammatical patterns and common idioms in English.

The use of Taylor Swift songs in English learning offers linguistic benefits while fostering student autonomy and independent learning. Self-Determination Theory, introduced by Deci and Ryan in 1985, states that students tend to be more motivated to learn when they feel they have control over their learning process. Students can immerse themselves in English listening practice at their own pace through music-based learning, unlike traditional classroom practice which is often structured and supervised by the teacher. They can choose the songs they want to hear, replay challenging passages, and look up unfamiliar terms at their own pace. This personalized learning approach fosters a relaxed environment, reducing the anxiety often associated with formal hearing assessments and encouraging a more enjoyable and stress-free learning experience.

Additionally, Taylor Swift's global fame and huge influence in popular culture make her music a particularly interesting resource for younger students. Students can engage with English in significant and applicable ways when they encounter authentic English, not scripted educational content. The findings of Yildirim et al. (2023) align with this, highlighting that students show increased engagement when learning materials reflect their personal experiences and interests. As a result, using Taylor Swift's songs as a listening resource not only

helps improve language skills, but also fosters personal enjoyment and lasting dedication in the language learning journey.

2. The Challenges Faced by Students When Using Taylor Swift's Songs in Learning Listening

The findings of this study indicate that students face several challenges. Using Taylor Swift's music as a learning resource presents various challenges to students, although her songs serve as an engaging and effective means of improving listening skills. Many of these challenges involve difficulty understanding advanced vocabulary and figurative language, difficulty with fast-paced lyrics and pronunciation, and finding a balance between having fun and actively absorbing information. Because each of these challenges significantly impacts students' overall listening comprehension experience, it is important for them to develop strategies that will enable them to overcome these barriers..

a. Difficulty in Understanding Advanced Vocabulary and Figurative

Students often face great difficulty when using Taylor Swift's songs for listening comprehension, especially in understanding the complex vocabulary and figurative language embedded in the lyrics. Unlike classroom listening materials that are generally appropriate to students' proficiency levels, song lyrics often include idiomatic expressions, poetic structures, and metaphorical phrases that may be difficult for non-native speakers to understand. This challenge can be clarified through Nation's

(2001) theory of vocabulary acquisition, which emphasizes that simple exposure to complex words is often insufficient for comprehension. Although repeated listening can be helpful in identifying specific words, understanding figurative language requires additional learning efforts, such as focused vocabulary teaching or improved inferencing abilities. Taylor Swift often uses literary techniques such as metaphor, similes, and personification in her songwriting, which can pose a challenge for students trying to understand the intended meaning without deeper linguistic analysis. Without prior experience with these stylistic features, students may have difficulty connecting the words they hear to their intended meaning. Students responded to this challenge by using independent tactics for vocabulary learning. These strategies include researching unfamiliar words, annotating lyrics, and consulting internet sources for song interpretations. Several students in this study expressed their frustration when encountering words or phrases that were unfamiliar or had meanings that could not be understood through direct translation. This is in line with the Noticing Hypothesis by Schmidt (1990) which states that to acquire a language, a person must consciously pay attention to the characteristics of the language being studied. Student retention and understanding improves over time for students who take the initiative to engage with difficult terminology through activities such as writing, translating, or engaging in conversation with their classmates.

This suggests that although Swift's songs may provide some initial problems, they also encourage more engaging ways of vocabulary acquisition, ultimately improving students' lexical comprehension. This is because Swift's songs develop a more interesting method of vocabulary acquisition.

b. Challenges with Fast-Paced Lyrics and Pronunciation

The findings of this research reveal that a significant challenge identified is difficulty in understanding lyrics delivered at a fast tempo, along with associated speech. Many students report difficulty keeping up with Swift's singing speed, especially on songs that include rapid word transitions and complex phrase structures. In everyday spoken English, such as in song lyrics, words often get mixed up, making it difficult for students to differentiate between separate words and phrases. This is different from the typical listening practice in classrooms, where speech is often slowed down and clearly articulated.

This aspect is in line with the model of speech perception in second language learners proposed by Field (2008), which states that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students often face difficulties in segmenting speech due to shorter forms, contractions, and linking sounds. In songs, the words are often abbreviated or mixed up, which can pose a challenge for students to recognize them. This is especially true for learners who are only familiar with the written form of English. In many of Swift's songs, for

example, the words are elongated, syllables are dropped, or the sounds blend together. Consequently, listeners must rely on their ability to recognize patterns and their prior knowledge to identify songs accurately. Students develop thoughtful listening strategies to overcome these challenges.

These techniques include reducing playback speed, utilizing lyric videos for simultaneous reading and listening, and playing important passages repeatedly during the same listening session. This is in line with the metacognitive listening strategy suggested by Vandergrift and Goh (2012). These strategies highlight that successful learners take ownership of their listening process by dissecting difficult aspects and reconstructing understanding through multiple encounters. Additionally, some students engage in shadowing techniques, where they repeat the lyrics in real time. This allows them to improve their ability to understand fast speech and develop more authentic pronunciation.

Despite the implementation of these tactics, the challenge of understanding fast-paced lyrics remains a significant obstacle to learning through music, especially for students with lower levels of competency. This highlights the importance of gradual exposure, where students start with slower-paced songs before progressing to more complex, faster-paced songs. Additionally, educators can enhance listening practice by providing students with pre-listening activities. This activity may involve presenting

key terminology or playing short lyric segments before engaging with the entire song itself.

c. Balancing Enjoyment with Active Learning

Students often face challenges in finding a balance between actively engaging in listening practice and enjoying the music they experience. Many students admit that at first they listened to Taylor Swift's songs just for entertainment, without any desire to improve their understanding of the lyrics. The transition from passive listening learning to active learning, where students deliberately analyze lyrics and focus on improving their listening skills, proves difficult for some, even though music provides an engaging way to connect with language. This challenge is in line with the Oxford Model of Language Learning Strategies (1990), which distinguishes between cognitive strategies that focus on active analysis and language processing, and emotive strategies that emphasize the enjoyment and motivation derived from language learning. A large number of students initially rely on emotive techniques, which primarily involve listening for enjoyment. Eventually, they realized that by combining cognitive strategies such as lyric analysis and pronunciation practice, they significantly improved their ability to understand what they listened to.

In addition, Fadillah, (2015) research on student motivation and engagement revealed that students who utilized structured learning strategies in music-based activities produced better improvements in

listening skills than students who relied solely on passive exposure. These are the conclusions that can be drawn from the information presented in the research. It is because of this that students who actively examined lyrics, followed along with subtitles, or practiced repeating words aloud reported greater development in their listening abilities in comparison to students who listened solely for the purpose of enjoyment. In order to solve this difficulty, the students devised a hybrid approach, in which they allowed themselves to enjoy the music while simultaneously including tactics for deliberate learning. It was observed by a few students that they initially listened to a song in a casual manner, and then subsequent to that, they replayed it with the goal of concentrating on vocabulary or pronunciation. Others reported that they moved between different modes of listening, at times simply enjoying the tune and at other times considering the song as a structured learning tool. They did this several times throughout the musical performance. The result implies that although music-based learning is successful, in order for it to be truly beneficial, it takes a certain level of self-discipline and planning on the part of the learner. When teachers and students alike combine structured and unstructured listening activities, they are able to maximize the effectiveness of song-based learning. This ensures that students gain not only from the motivational components of music but also from focused language development tactics.

3. Implication for EFL Learning

The findings of this study highlight significant implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, notably in the areas of student engagement, instructional design, and self-directed learning methodologies. These are the topics that are highlighted in this study. The utilization of Taylor Swift's songs as a listening resource for the purpose of giving learners with authentic exposure to spoken English, greater motivation, and possibilities for meaningful interaction with language is a demonstration of how music may serve as an effective addition to traditional listening exercises. However, in order to get the most of its benefits, it is necessary for both students and teachers to implement systematic methods that change music from a passive listening experience into an active learning tool.

a. Encouraging Self-Directed Learning in Listening Practice

This study has a number of important implications, one of the most important being the role that music plays in fostering self-directed learning environments. Learning through music gives students the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning process, in contrast to listening activities that are conducted in the classroom, which are frequently organized around instruction lead by the instructor. According to Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory, when students have a sense of autonomy and are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to engage profoundly with the process of learning a language.

Students have the opportunity to utilize Taylor Swift's songs, which are easily accessible and flexible, as a learning resource that they can use outside of the classroom. These songs are widely available and individually enjoyable for many students. A large number of students develop their own listening tactics, as shown by the findings of this study. These strategies include slowing down the playback speed, reading the lyrics while listening, and repeating the song many times to improve their understanding. This is consistent with the metacognitive listening strategy proposed by Vandergrift and Goh (2012), each of which places an emphasis on the significance of exercising active control over the learning process. Students can improve their listening skills at their own pace by focusing on a particular linguistic passage, pausing the music, and playing it again. This makes music an effective tool for long-term language acquisition. However, to be truly effective, students need to move from passive listening to active engagement so that independent learning through music can produce the desired results. In the beginning, a large number of students listened to Taylor Swift's songs more as entertainment than as a means of gaining knowledge. People who combine fun with systematic analysis, such as looking up difficult terms, practicing pronunciation, and deciphering tricky phrases, show significant improvements in listening comprehension over time. This suggests that although music has the potential to enhance

language learning, for students to truly benefit from it, they need to adopt deliberate and structured techniques.

b. Integrating Music into EFL Instruction

This study highlights the potential benefits of incorporating music into formal EFL teaching to improve listening skills. Conventional auditory resources, such as written conversations and audio files, often fail to provide the genuine connection and emotional resonance that music offers. Research shows that students connect more deeply with content that touches personally and evokes an emotional response (Yildirim et al., 2023). Incorporating music into the curriculum allows teachers to foster more engaging and interactive learning experiences, which improve listening comprehension and overall language development. Educators can incorporate Taylor Swift songs as an additional tool to improve pronunciation, expand vocabulary, and improve listening comprehension skills. An effective method involves lyric analysis, in which students engage with a song while following the lyrics, pinpointing important vocabulary and expressions, and exploring its meaning through discussion. This approach is consistent with Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which highlights the importance of conscious focus on linguistic elements in the process of language acquisition.

By encouraging students to engage with song lyrics, teachers can help them gain a deeper understanding of sentence structure, idiomatic expressions, and word usage in spoken English. Additionally, doing pronunciation exercises that utilize song lyrics can help students improve their phonemic awareness and fluency. Swift's clear articulation and controlled pronunciation make her songs very effective for teaching intonation, stress patterns, and connected speech. Shadowing exercises, where students imitate the lyrics along with the singer, can increase their capacity to understand spoken English quickly and develop more authentic pronunciation. This method is supported by Murphey's (1992) research on song-based learning, which found that learners who repeatedly imitated song lyrics showed increased pronunciation accuracy and better auditory retention. Despite the obvious benefits, incorporating music into EFL teaching requires a well-organized strategy to improve learning outcomes. Educators should carefully select songs appropriate to students' skill levels and offer pre- and post-listening assignments to improve comprehension. For example, before listening, students might be familiarized with important vocabulary and phrases, and after the listening activity, they might participate in a discussion or writing assignment centered on the theme of the song. Integrating music with organized classroom activities allows educators to develop students' linguistic competence and improve their listening fluency.

c. Bridging the Gap Between Formal Instruction and Informal Learning

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of connecting classroom learning with informal, independent learning in music contexts. Formal instruction offers a structured approach to grammar and vocabulary development, while informal learning through music introduces students to natural speech patterns, cultural expressions, and practical uses of the English language in real-world contexts. By recognizing the importance of both approaches, educators can foster a more comprehensive learning experience that caters to a variety of learning styles. This is in accordance with the Oxford Language Learning Strategy Model (1990), which categorizes language learning strategies into cognitive, metacognitive and social types. Structured classroom activities primarily improve cognitive strategies, such as memorization and practice, whereas music-based learning increases metacognitive awareness. This allows students to self-monitor their progress, reflect on their comprehension challenges, and explore a variety of listening techniques. By combining the two approaches, students improve their listening skills and cultivate a more flexible attitude towards language learning. Additionally, utilizing Taylor Swift's songs as a culturally important educational resource emphasizes the value of genuine engagement with English-language media. In an increasingly interconnected world, where students can utilize a wide range of digital resources, educators must motivate students to explore music, podcasts, and

films as additional listening aids. Encouraging independence and curiosity in language acquisition allows students to cultivate a long-term interest in English outside the classroom environment.